WCS Children's Services
PROGRAM DELIVERY- Interactions with Children Policy

Purpose

Quality Area 5 of the National Quality Standard, Relationships with Children, explores how each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other children and adults.

Element 5.1.1: Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.

Element 5.1.2: The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.

Element 5.2.1: Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.

Element 5.2.2: Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

Educators can help children learn and practice their social skills by providing them with a supportive environment. Educators guide and teach children to recognise and express their emotions and manage their own behaviour. When educators adopt a positive and active approach to behaviour guidance, they reduce challenging behaviours and encourage children to achieve success, develop positive self-esteem and increase competence.

Scope

This policy applies to all WCS Children's Services staff, including educators, volunteers and students on placement. References to educators in this document apply to all staff employed to work with children on a permanent, contract or casual basis.

This policy applies to all premises controlled by WCS, and children, parents, guardians and visitors to those premises.

Policy Statement

This policy sets out WCS Children Services expectations for educators around interactions and relationships with children and to facilitate children's friendships with each other. It also details the approach to children who may have difficulty relating to others and following guidelines that uphold the safety, dignity and rights of all children.

Aim

To provide an education and care environment where the dignity and rights of each child are maintained and children are supported and encouraged to express themselves and their opinions. Children are guided towards behaviour which is considerate of others while allowing experiences that develop self-esteem and self-reliance.

Strategies and Practices

- The service's equipment, resources and materials meet the needs and interests of the children, and support children's learning and cooperative play.

- Children are able to access resources and equipment independently. Adequate resources are provided to promote engagement, yet still provide opportunities to share.

- Resources are open ended and allow for multiple uses to encourage creativity and sustainable practices.

- The educational program is based on the knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests of each child. This is communicated to educators by their parents/guardians, observed by educators and contributed to by the children. Each child's learning and development are assessed as part of the programming cycle of planning, documentation and evaluation.

- The program has extended periods of uninterrupted play which accommodate child-initiated, educator-initiated and co-constructed activities. This blend provides children the opportunities to make choices, contribute their own ideas, thoughts and feelings – and to develop skills and social competence. Children then know that they are valued as capable and competent.

- The program is set up to meet children's needs and modified as required to help children negotiate problems and complications.

- Educators' interactions and relationships with children are based on mutual respect, are consistent and focus on age and developmentally appropriate language. The WCS *'Code of Conduct'* is also emphasised during educator induction.

- Educators model positive speech such as "Walk inside, run outside" instead of "Don't run". Children are redirected and the reasons for the rules are explained to children.

- The service rosters ensure continuity of care so that the children are with educators who know them well and are interested in what they think, feel and do.

- Educators promote the children's wellbeing, self-esteem and sense of security by being responsive, warm, trusting and respectful.

- Routines are unhurried, largely social occasions.

- Educators include one-on-one time with babies, and are attuned to them.

- Educator involvement and participation aims to provide an environment that is safe and enjoyable for everyone.

- Educators consistently model positive social skills in their everyday interactions with other adults and children.

- Educators encourage children to develop care, empathy and respect however do not force children to say the words "I'm sorry" without genuine feeling, especially young children.

- Educators have open-ended discussions which enable children to provide more detailed responses and encourages them to stimulate their thinking and develop their language skills. These discussions support children to focus and make meaning of their experiences and enable them to see various possibilities.

- The service provides educators with professional development in relating with children and in positive behaviour guidance.

- The service is committed to working in partnerships with parents/guardians to best meet the education and care needs of their children. The communication between home and the service is especially important when children experience difficultly relating to others, and ensures that each party is aware of what is occurring in the child's day.

- Educators collaborate with the children to set clear guidelines for behaviour. Reasons for rules are identified and shared. Limits are expressed in positive terms and based on the safety and rights of all children at the service.

- Educators intentionally teach children to play and to complete projects together, and to resolve social conflicts that arise. Educators encourage children to resolve conflicts for themselves, but give strategies and suggestions when needed. They model positive behaviour and language.

- Educators take an anti-bias approach and take advantage of teachable moments to support children's understanding of the value of diversity.

- Educators acknowledge children's efforts and intentions while also having high expectations. Educator feedback focusses on the processes that children use rather the outcomes they produce.

- Educators promote encouragement rather than praise. Encouragement promotes the child's self-motivation and autonomy, and focuses on effort. Praise can weaken motivation and teach children to rely on the approval of others and on reward systems.

- Educators intentionally teach children protective behaviours.

When responding to children who have difficulty relating to others or following guidelines, educators:

- Will adopt a positive and collaborative approach when guiding children's behaviour. They accept children's behaviour as a natural part of acquiring social skills, and view these as teaching/learning opportunities.

- Draw upon strategies that do not diminish the child in the eyes of others and, at the same time, do not negatively affect onlooking children. Strategies could include: redirection, reminders of the rules (without censure), suggesting alternatives, offering choices and encouraging children to think about how others might feel (empathy).

- Question aspects of the environment that might contribute to the behaviour.

  o Is adequate and safe playing space available?
  o Has sufficient personal play space been provided?
  o Is a quiet play space available?
  o Is an active play space available?
  o Do the resources, materials and equipment meet the children's needs?
  o Can children choose freely from the resources, materials and equipment?
  o Is the child familiar with the service's routines and expectations?

- Consider other influences on the child.

  o Specific circumstances leading up to event or incident
  o Family circumstances and home life
  o Specific times of day
  o The weather and time of the year
  o Age and development
  o Level of familiarity with the educators, and the service's routines and expectations
  o General health and wellbeing
  o Past traumatic events or experiences
  o Prior experiences.

- Adopt a problem-solving approach which involves the children in deciding what to do in the situation.

- Acknowledge that corporal punishment in any form is strictly forbidden (refer to mandatory reporting procedure).

When managing children with recurrent difficulty relating to others or following guidelines, educators:

- Focus on developing strong respectful relationships with all families, so that there is an established relationship in place.

- Maintain written records of dates, times, circumstances and possible causes of the incidents.

- Discuss with the parents/guardians any concerns about their child's behaviour from the first instance, to avoid escalation of behaviour where possible.

- Collaborate with parents/guardians in constructing a positive behaviour support plan to help the child acquire the social skills necessary to play and learn with others. When practicable, have the child contribute to the plan.

- Refer parents/guardians to an external support agency, when appropriate, and work collaboratively with that agency to ensure a consistent approach.

- Refer to service procedure in regards to individual service *Behaviour Guidance Strategies* if required.

Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

- To inform the service of any changes in their child's education and care needs.

- To contribute to the program.

- To provide the service with up-to-date information on their child and on any external circumstances affecting the child.

- To collaborate with educators in establishing any positive behaviour support plan as required.

- To seek professional help for their child when recommended by the service.

Links to Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2018

Regs	155	Interactions with children
	156	Relationships in groups

QA	1.1.1	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
	1.1.2	Each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
	1.1.3	All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.
	1.2.2	Educators respond to children's ideas and play and extend children's learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback.
	1.2.3	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and influence events in their world.
	2.1.1	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.

	2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
	2.2.3	Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.
	4.1.1	The organisation of educators across the service supports children's learning and development.
	4.1.2	Every effort is made for children to experience continuity of educators at the service.
	5.1.1	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
	5.1.2	The dignity and the rights of every child are maintained.
	5.2.1	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
	5.2.2	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.
	6.1.1	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.
	6.1.2	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
	6.1.3	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.

Sources, Further Reading and Useful Websites

Sources

- Abbey. B. (2007). *Behaviour management of children in long day care centres: The effects of training on carers' practices*. PhD thesis.
- Gartrell, D. (1995). Misbehaviour or mistaken behaviour. *Young Children*. 50(5) 27-34.
- Dr. B. Abbey and P. Maclean, NQS - the complete system of policies, procedures and forms, www.childcarebydesign.

Further reading

- Tebyani, V. (2009). *Guiding children's behaviour in child care*. https://central.hutchins.tas.edu.au/sites/oshc/Resources%20for%20Parents%20and%20Families/Promoting%20Positive%20Behaviour/Guiding%20Children's%20Behaviour.pdf accessed 17 August 2020.
- Porter, L. (2009). Guiding children's behaviour file:///G:/Children's%20Services/School%20Age%20Care/OSHC%20Management/Krysta/Policy%20Review/Behaviour%20guidance/Louise-Porter-developing_responsible_behaviour.pdf accessed 17 August 2020.

Useful websites

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority – www.acecqa.com
- Early Childhood Australia – www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au

Policy Review

This policy is a living document and will be monitored and reviewed as issues are identified or within 24 months. Proposed changes will be circulated and discussed by all services and any external stakeholders for approval.

Approved by Susan Henderson, Manager, Children's Services:

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Current version

Service line	Service area	Children's Services	Version	2.0
Process owner	Director, Children, Youth and Family	**Date of issue**	October 2020
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Modification history (including current version)

Version	Date	Author	Approved by	Description of changes
1.0	Nov 2014		Susan Henderson	New policy "Relationships with Children"
1.1	Feb 2018		Susan Henderson	Revised National Quality Standard 2018
2.0	Sept 2020	Krysta Cordina	Kate West	Additional content in line with current theory and practice; separate behaviour guidance procedure; rename policy to "Interactions with Children"